



Everychild Foundation Awards \$1 Million Grant to Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services

The Everychild Foundation has awarded its 2018 \$1 million grant to Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services to support the expansion of its successful suicide prevention program. The program provides a full continuum of services to youth under 24 and their families, including crisis intervention, therapy and support, and training and education. The program will be named the Everychild Suicide Prevention Program.

This is the 19th annual grant awarded by the Everychild Foundation which has given more than \$17 million to help Los Angeles area children and their families in need since 2000. Everychild is a group of over 200 women who, annually, each donate \$5,000 to fund a single \$1 million grant to launch or expand a new innovative replicable project easing suffering of local children.

The Everychild grant will cover the final capital expenses incurred before opening the new facility in Century City. The building was purchased in 2017 by Didi Hirsch to house its suicide prevention program, which had outgrown its existing facility. The expenses covered by the grant include an upgraded crisis call/chat data system, software for data analysis, AV video conferencing equipment, a generator to run the crisis line during disasters and outages, 28 sound-proofed crisis line cubicles, and related furnishings.

“The women of Everychild are so grateful for this important opportunity to bring more resources and attention to suicide prevention,” said Everychild Founder and President Jacqueline Caster. “Until recently, the topic of suicide was only discussed in hushed tones and out of the public eye, as it was considered a shameful act. Today, views have changed, and it is widely known that when a young person has suicidal thoughts, they are mostly a result of untreated mental health issues. If this new Center, with an increased capacity to help and to publicize the program, can save even just one young person from taking his/her own life, this new grant will have been a tremendous success.”

Didi Hirsch’s expansion was undertaken because the agency could not meet the increasing need for their services without a larger home and state of the art technology and equipment.

“With its generous support, the Everychild Foundation has made a commitment to one of the most stigmatized and neglected health risks facing youth and young adults—suicide,” said Dr. Kita S. Curry, CEO of Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. “The suicide rate doubled among 10-

to 14-year-olds in the last decade, and it is the second-leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds. Thanks to the Everychild Foundation, in our new Suicide Prevention Center, we will have the room and tools needed to expand services for this vulnerable group.”

The primary aim of the Everychild Suicide Prevention Program is to alleviate the hopelessness and despair that prompt suicide attempts and deaths among youth. To reach this result, Didi Hirsch believes three specific goals need to be met:

1. Reach more individuals 24 and younger in Los Angeles who are contemplating suicide or are worried about a friend in danger of suicide through the call/chat Crisis Line.
2. Train more middle school, high school and college students, teachers and parents to recognize and respond to warning signs of suicide.
3. Launch a new suicide loss support group for teenagers using a tailored curriculum developed by Didi Hirsch.

Didi Hirsch anticipates that its crisis chat/call line will increase calls to youth who they can assist from the current 16,322 contacts to 17,500 and increase students/parents/teachers trained from 5,200 to more than 6,000 over two years. The training program is designed for middle/high school and college students, teachers and parents to help them recognize and respond to the warning signs of suicide as well as help over 200 youth and their families heal through grief support groups.

For 75 years, Didi Hirsch has provided quality mental health, substance use and suicide prevention services in Los Angeles communities where poverty or stigma limit access. Founded in the 1930s by a few philanthropic women who sought to fund psychiatric care for families devastated by the Great Depression, it grew to become the first nonprofit mental health clinic of its kind in Los Angeles County. In 2017, with a staff of 500 and 200 volunteers, Didi Hirsch provided services to more than 127,000 clients of all ages.

For more information on the Everychild Foundation and the 2018 grant, please visit www.everychildfoundation.org.

